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AMERICA AND JAPAN



BY

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This is the first of a series of brief but authoritative articles on the common intellectual, social and commercial features in the life of the people of the United States and other important countries of the world, for which arrangements have been made by the Executive Committee of this Association.

Future documents will deal with the South American countries, with the Orient, with France, England, Germany, Italy, Spain, Canada and Mexico.

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In the history of intertribal or international intercourse, there are three principal causes of irritation, bitterness of feeling and strife. These are, first, the impulsive movements or more deliberate invasions of multitudes that frankly seek to conquer the land and plunder the wealth of others; second, the jealousies, anger and other bad passions of powerful individuals among the ruling classes; and, third, the less blameworthy and indeed, under certain circumstances, almost inevitable misunderstandings by different nations of each other's motives and character. This last cause, therefore, a more intimate and intelligent acquaintance may reasonably be expected at least in part to remove.

As that complex and obscure thing which we call "civilization" advances, the first two of these three causes become less openly and powerfully operative. The "hordes" of one people no longer descend upon the territory of another people, stealing, burning, murdering and committing even baser crimes—unashamed to be regarded and met in their true character as the avowed enemies of mankind. Eunuchs, mistresses, adventurous promoters, selfish and heartless monarchs, and their counsellors or so-called statesmen, cease to figure so conspicuously as the real procurers of a national resort to arms. The obvious crime and immorality of such a resort, in order merely to satisfy ambition, greed and lust, or to gratify feelings of per-

sonal resentment and revenge, compels war to masquerade under a claim to higher motives and more humane methods. Thus the complete and final cure for the first two classes of forces that work to inflame passion and engender violence, requires of the civilized nations themselves the loosening and the culture of the moral and religious forces that make for good-will and for peace—*each in its own home-land*. This work is not *between* nations but *within* nations. What America, and every other so-called Christian people, chiefly needs in order to promote “international conciliation,” is less of unscrupulous greed in its own business, less of personal and selfish ambition in its own politics, more of the spirit of wisdom and of righteousness in its pulpits, and less of hypocrisy in its churches.

The case is not precisely the same, however, with the third class of the causes of war referred to above. The cure for this, I have said, is enlightenment—a better knowledge, and so a worthier appreciation of each other on the part of the nations of the earth. In the stage of ignorance, those foreign peoples who most differ from ourselves—even if the difference be really rather superficial and relatively unimportant—are sure to seem “barbarian.” The nation, like the individual man, that looks or acts strange, is the more apt to become in fact estranged. Inasmuch as it is a mark of friendship, or of friendly condescension, to explain one’s self when suspected of wrong and injurious conduct, the misunderstood stranger the more readily becomes the hated enemy. And then, when a considerable course of such misunderstandings, or a series of unexplained differences of views and of actions seriously affects property rights or national

pride, war follows as a result that seems justifiable in the eyes of both parties.

All that has just been said is particularly pertinent as touching the present relations of Occident and Orient, of America and Europe on the one hand and of the eastern peoples on the other hand. Recent events have made the present time both critical and opportune, in respect to this need of mutual understanding. For the Russo-Japanese war, and its sequent conventions and treaties, has temporarily checked, if it has not (as every lover of the race, in my judgment, ought to hope) permanently abolished the attempts of western nations to dominate and exploit the eastern world. At the same time, it has stirred ambitions and hopes—especially in China and India—which may easily develop into results that will greatly alter the future of human affairs.

In this important work, which is an actual and accomplished work of arousing the Orient, and a would-be and hoped-for work of leading it out into the enjoyment of some of the more obvious advantages of modern western civilization, there can be no doubt that Japan stands preëminent. It is, therefore, particularly desirable, in order to avoid ill-will and possible strife, that Japan should be understood by the western peoples. And among them all, what one can be more interested in, and obligated to, the careful cultivation of such good understanding that leads to good-will than is the United States?

The impression which has been fostered by such writers as Mr. Kipling, and even by Mr. Hearn, as well as by many travellers and chance visitors, that Orient and Occident are so radically different as to make it

impossible for them to understand each other, has gone abroad widely. The impression is by no means wholly true. Even the aversions, oppositions and antagonisms awakened by the British in India, the Dutch in Java and Sumatra, the Russians in China, and the Americans in the Philippines, are in each case substantially the same as those which the other party would feel, if the relations were reversed. That it is inconceivable for relations ever to be reversed, may turn out on reflection, or even at some time in the future on experience, to be a mere product of racial self-conceit. It is not yet proved that the Anglo-Saxons or any other European peoples are designed by a retributive Providence to become that "recurrent curse of mankind, a dominant race."

At all events, a great deal of that which can be said, with much impressiveness and with no little truth-seeming, of other nations of the Far East, cannot be said of Japan. For Japan has never been, and is not now, *Oriental*, as are India, China, and Korea. Its two hundred and fifty years of exclusiveness and of isolated feudal development, as well as certain racial characteristics, prevented the more purely *Oriental* type of civilization from gaining supremacy there. Indeed, up to the time when the warships of the United States under Commodore Perry appeared off her coasts, the political and social constitution and habits of life of Japan, in several important respects resembled more those of mediæval Europe than those of the other eastern nations of that date. This contention could be established, if it were necessary, by a detailed examination of the different main factors entering into its civilization. But the fact forms one of the most

important reasons why Japan has so rapidly and readily adopted and adapted the business methods and modes of procedure, the system of public and professional education; the instruments and technique of manufacture, and even the constitutional policy and legal forms of Europe and America. Thus, the citizen of the United States or of Western Europe, who is prepared to get below certain superficial differences and reach down to the more fundamental likeness, may feel more at home in Japan than in certain parts of Europe itself; and much more than in Turkey in Asia or, indeed, any portion of the Near East. Even those more subtle differences in religious, ethical and political conceptions which still undoubtedly influence, or even dominate, the Japanese mind, are, in most cases, not difficult for the psychologist or the student of history to recognize in himself or in his ancestors.

I am glad then to testify out of a full and long experience, that just as intelligent, self-respecting and mutually respecting, and permanent friendships may exist between individual Japanese and individual Americans as between any two classes of individuals within either of the two nations. But much more than this is true, or, rather, the same thing is true as between the two nations at large. On the whole, and until the most recent times, the feeling of the Japanese people toward the United States has been one of warm friendship, and even of admiration and enthusiastic good-will. This feeling on their part has contained, indeed, a considerable mixture of gratitude and other elements that are not likely to endure; but in union with these there has always been something more permanently and deeply interfused. This has been an apprehension—

at first rather dim but becoming clearer as the future relations of the two nations have defined themselves in thought and in fact—of a certain community of intellectual, social and commercial interests between them, the welfare of which requires peace, and the marring, if not the total destruction, of which would come about through alienation and war.

I have said that friendly feeling toward the United States has hitherto been widespread and popular in Japan. This fact is a convincing witness to the admirable chivalric nature of the more intelligent and high-class Japanese. Count Okuma once said to me that he regarded Commodore Perry as the “best friend Japan ever had,”—among foreigners, of course. Everywhere that I went during the years of 1906–1907, the flags of the two countries were hung together, over the gates of the school-yards and of private residences, over welcome-arches and in banqueting halls. At Hikone it was taken for granted that we, as Americans, would be interested in the relics of Count Ii, who lost his life because he signed the Treaty with Townsend Harris; at Ikegami, that we would look reverently upon the tomb of the wrecked American sailors, whose bodies the good monks rescued and buried two generations ago. And yet let us remember that, in the words of Prince Ito, “the treaties which had been concluded with the Western Powers were not made *at the instance of Japan*; and, therefore, the chief provisions were not reciprocal, especially so with regard to jurisdiction and tariff.”

It is in these last words, I am sure, that we find the hidden explanation of much liability to misunderstanding and ill-will between Occident and Orient, and,

more especially, between America and Japan. We led the western nations in *forcing* Japan to admit us and them to residence and to trade. We joined Europe in framing and maintaining treaties that were not "reciprocal with regard to jurisdiction and tariff." And now that Japan has succeeded in vindicating and gaining the full right to a place beside us, in the rank of the leading nations of the civilized world, we find it hard to understand and sympathize with her people, in terms of a strict reciprocity—"especially so with regard to jurisdiction and tariff." *But with Japan, as much as, and perhaps even more than, with any of the other nations, international conciliation depends upon an attitude of mind and a course of conduct dictated by moral and prudential considerations that are reciprocal.*

Under this principle of reciprocity, the bonds which should bind America and Japan together are peculiarly strong and tenacious. Every year the intellectual development and growth in educational interests of the two countries is binding them more firmly together. Thousands of Japanese youth have come to the United States to study, in all sorts of institutions, every kind of subject; they have gone back to the home-country with lasting feelings of respect and affection for their American teachers and fellow-pupils. Hundreds of American men and women have gone to Japan to teach thousands of Japanese youth there; and if the number of foreign teachers has of late been greatly diminished,—as, indeed, it should have been—still the pupils are not unmindful of what these foreign teachers have already done for them. (For myself, I can testify that no other class of students are, as a rule, so appreciative and so grateful as the Japanese.) Thousands of books

by American authors are disseminating in Japan the science, literature and philosophy with which our own publishers are making us familiar at home. And what is more important, the ideas and instructions of these living voices and printed pages are falling into much more receptive, and, in turn, productive, soil in this than in any other oriental country. No one can become familiar with not only the missionary schools but also with the government elementary schools, without being impressed with the similarity, and in important respects the identity, of the popular education in America and in Japan. Whereas, there is no such similarity when we turn to the cases of India, China and Korea—the last, irrespective of the beginning which the Japanese have made there.

The social differences between the United States and all Oriental countries, including Japan, are indeed most impressive to the ordinary traveller, or to the superficial traveller, when away from the capitals and the principal ports. But these differences, which were not so important in Japan as in other parts of the Orient previous to its opening, are, year by year, becoming less formidable in the way of producing misunderstanding, and of interfering with efforts at conciliation whenever misunderstanding arises. At the very moment, for example, that writers like Mr. Millard are creating prejudice by exaggerating the undemocratic character of the Japanese government, the latter is modifying the conditions of suffrage so as to double the number of voters. The status of woman, which has never in Japan been upon the ordinarily low oriental level, has been raised by wise laws and improvements in education, so that it now compares favorably with

that in most countries of Europe. Many of the material advantages of modern civilization are even more widely distributed in Japan than they are in the United States. Newspapers are circulated by the thousands in the smaller villages and towns. As soon as the poverty of the nation and the diminution of the war-debt will permit, the enactment of legal restrictions will compel what the feeling of fraternal sympathy is now accomplishing in many cases—namely, the amelioration of the physical condition of factory laborers, especially of the women and children. As to all the greater crimes, Japan is safer both for life and for property than is the United States to-day. And, with one exception, it is not inferior in respect of those vices that are less easily guarded against by law. The men selected for diplomatic and consular service are more carefully trained and more cautious about giving needless offense to foreign nations than are our men in similar positions.

There is one particular that should be mentioned in a more emphatic way. The attempt has been made—it is to be feared, for selfish political purposes—to create the impression that Japan is distinctively a military nation, bound to go to war about once in so often and meantime “spoiling for a fight.” During its feudal period there was indeed much fighting among the feudal lords, until the great Iyéyasu brought them all under the control of the Shogunate. But, with the exception of the invasion of Korea by Hideyoshi, Japan has never entered upon a war of conquest. To quote again from Prince Ito: “Japan’s military reform was executed mainly for defensive purposes, and not from any desire for expansion.” Indeed, it has several

times, in the case of Korea, refrained under great temptation from a punitive war. Those foreigners who know best the government and the people are confident to-day that the nation desires peace, and will use all possible morally right means to secure peace.

It is doubtless when we come to speak of the present and future commercial relations of America and Japan that we are upon the most dangerous ground. Undoubtedly, Japan intends to secure a large economical development, both in the form of internal agriculture and manufactures and also of foreign commerce. This is her right and her necessity; a right that must, however, be guided by law and ethics, and a necessity that is enforced by the war debt and by her rapidly increasing population. Undoubtedly, also, her position geographically and the present character of her population give her certain considerable advantages over other nations in the rivalries of trade in the Far East. The rivalries of trade are therefore sure to influence the attitudes toward each other of America and Japan in the near, and perhaps even more in the more distant, future. It will be impossible to show that the merely commercial interests of the two countries are identical. So that in both of them it is now, and it will continue to be, the ambitious members of the military class and the greedy and unscrupulous members of the business classes, who will most need to be watched and to be checked in order to keep relations of peace and friendship between the two nations.

It is easy to argue that, in the long run, war is the enemy of the successful economical development of mankind. It is more difficult to show that, in particular cases, neither of the two nations who war with each

other is economically benefited in this way. It is impossible to prove that certain individuals and corporations which aim to control, and actually do control politics, are not made rich through the wars, increasing taxation and poverty of their own and other peoples. Wherefore, we must always fall back upon the moral and religious influences in order to effect international conciliation, when the commercial interests of individuals or peoples are at stake. In my judgment, our treatment of this interest may be brief and must be thorough. Here, then, is one perfectly clear and unchanging moral and religious principle. *Neither the protection nor the advancement of any merely commercial rivalry can ever afford a moral justification for war.* And when Christian nations enter upon war for the sake of any such interest, they make a mockery of the name they profess.

At present, it is plainly inexpedient for both nations that America and Japan should weaken, not to say destroy, the bonds of friendship which have bound them together from the beginning of their international intercourse until now. In the future, only grossly immoral behavior on the part of one or both of these two nations is likely to loosen or dissolve these bonds. Mutual understanding, reciprocal forbearance, genuine and intelligent sympathy, should then be a sufficient conciliator. And, surely, America has not managed her own railroads so justly and wisely as to be able to throw stones or dust in the face of Japan in respect of her management of the Manchurian Railway. Obviously, our own tariff regulations are not so fair and generous toward other nations as to enable us to act as severe critics of the tariffs regulated by Japan, now that she

has at last gained the right to control in this respect her own territory. Let us rather heal ourselves; and, meantime, let us hope that the prediction of her own statesman, whose views have already been quoted, and than whom no one knows his country better or has done more to shape her internal and her foreign policy, will come true: "Japan will continue more and more to feel the consciousness of her responsibility which has been made so great; and, not inconsistently with the determination, she will endeavor to contribute toward the maintenance of peace and the general welfare of the world at large . . . She will continue to follow the common path of the world's civilization and to share the benefits of its fruits with other countries."

One of the chief benefits in the interests of international conciliation, which may be expected to come from arbitration, is just this: It affords opportunity for arriving at a mutual understanding that is likely to be more complete because it is deliberate, and more in accordance with justice because it is mediated through disinterested parties. The particular and pressing dangers to continued good-will and peace between the United States and Japan at the present time arise from the selfish and unscrupulous greed of the commercial classes. There is evidence that a part of our own press is being subsidized, and its Far Eastern correspondents "instructed" to use every means, not excepting the circulation of misinformation and falsehood, in the support of the rivalries of trade and commerce in that portion of the world. But courts of arbitration are customarily composed of men, in part at least, who do not regard the success or failure of private schemes

for "promotion" and "exploitation" as belonging to the choicest interests or most invulnerable rights of mankind. For these reasons among others, therefore, the friends of peace may properly rejoice and take courage at the prospect of the conclusion of a general arbitration treaty between the United States and Japan.

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